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To: [Turin, David](#)
Subject: Emailing: Canal discharge deemed harmless - News - The Bourne Courier - Bourne, MA.htm
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Canal discharge deemed harmless



Friday

Aug 25, 2017 at 3:45 PM Aug 25, 2017 at 3:45 PM

By Paul Gately

The Taylors Point shoreline along the canal at Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Buzzards Bay turned a spectacular milky white midday August 21.

MMA authorities were alerted. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that cleaning operations at the college's waste treatment plant led to a direct discharge into the canal via a stormwater drainage pipe beneath Academy Drive, across from the football field.

"The wastewater treatment plant folks rinsed out an empty magnesium hydroxide drum into the storm drain," said Paul O'Keefe, MMA's vice president of operations. "Magnesium hydroxide is used in the plant process to control pH. It is the active ingredient in 'Milk of Magnesia.' It is harmless but unsightly."

O'Keefe said the chief wastewater plant operator was directed not to rinse and drain to the storm drain again. Instead, it should be redirected back into the plant.

"This is not a cause for concern," O'Keefe said. "It just looks bad. It won't happen again."

The milk-like material flowed east with the tide for about 30 minutes before ebbing farther out into the waterway westbound. Nearby fishermen casting from the canal rip rap were not deterred by the substance, though none could guess the nature of the discharge.

MMA Communications Director Chris Ryan said no notification to state or federal authorities was necessary.

"Vice-President O'Keefe investigated and determined there was 'no reporting requirements' for non-toxic material," Ryan noted August 23.

MMA holds a permit for treatment plant discharge into the federal waterway.

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